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VOLUME 39 | NUMBER 1993



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CITY PAGES ONLINE www.citypages.com
OFFICE HOURS Monday-Friday
8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

ISSN 0744-0456. City Pages is published weekly by Star Tribune Media Company, LLC. City Pages is located at 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. City Pages is available free of charge, limited to one copy per reader. Additional copies of the current issue may be purchased at the City Pages office for \$1, payable in advance. No person may, without prior written permission of City Pages, take more than one copy of each City Pages weekly issue. Subscriptions are available for \$100 per year. Subscription orders must include check or money order payable to City Pages, and should be mailed to City Pages Subscriptions, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Postmaster: Send address changes to City Pages, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488.

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THE SHORTLIST



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THE STAT SHEET

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The average daily pay for a substitute teacher in Minnesota

1

Minnesota's state ranking for snowmobile thefts

500

Number of crashes and spin-outs in the state during last Thursday's snow storm

\$1.2 billion

Forbes' valuation of the Minnesota Timberwolves

"Once this current generation finishes off Applebee's, diamonds, and golf, the next generation is going to be finishing off cars. The only sustainable, livable city in our future is one with minimal driving."

Reader Maxwell Singer responds to "You're more likely to get hurt in a traffic accident in Minneapolis if you're walking, biking, or poor," at citypages.com.

ACTS OF GOD

IT IS SAID THAT JESUS died for our sins. But the guess is he was thinking of something more respectable than a Man of God fighting with a woman in a liquor store parking lot.

Detroit Lakes police were summoned to the store after a woman accused Rev. John Hastings Simonson of keying her car during an altercation. Not only did exterior video support her claim, but interior video showed Simonson shoplifting mini-bottles of liquor before becoming a parking-lot combatant.

The First Lutheran Church pastor is charged with theft, damage to property, and showing a stunning lack of ambition in his side-hustle as a part-time criminal.

POPULAR STORIES AT CITYPAGES.COM

WATCH LIZZO PERFORM 'Juice' on 'The Tonight Show,' completely win over Fallon

Mall of America
BOY DRAGGED ON A LEASH is clearly a metaphor for... something

The **FROZEN PIZZAS** of Minnesota, ranked

HAROLD'S ON MAIN: Har Mar Superstar opens bar in Moorhead

Minnesotans' **TRUMP SNOW SCULPTURE BANNED** from national competition

WE'RE NO. 1

Minnesota really does have the worst winters in the nation

Remember when -50-degree wind chill made us prisoners in our own homes, and all the national media could talk about was how cold it was in Chicago?

Well, grumble no longer, Minnesota. We've finally gotten the recognition we deserve for the one thing we do better than anyone else: endure terrible winters. Thrillist has ranked each state for their "horrible" winters, based on everything from average temperatures to how much their winter sports teams suck.

We did it. We won.

We beat Michigan, which came in second place, and even Alaska, which came in third. Wisconsin, our rival in all things Midwestern and miserable, has to praise us from its lowly place at No. 7, and Illinois is forgotten at No. 13. This may be the only quality-of-life-related

list in existence in which Hawaii finishes at 50th.

It's pretty obvious why we're the champions of frozen-over hell. There are places in the north of our state that get "up to 170 inches" of snow, or as Thrillist put it, "two and a half times the height of Kent Hrbek!!" We sometimes see temperatures as low as -60. Plus, our sports teams never win championships, and "ice fishing can't be that cool, really."

"To think of the generally cheerful brood of Nordic-bred people being the winners in any sort of a contest of misery seems downright crazy," Thrillist writes. "But for all those adorable don'tcha knows, we think something else is going on. We think beneath that eternal Nordic happiness is some inner pain, trapped below the surface like a Grain Belt dropped into an ice fishing hole, a cauldron of hot anger ready to spill out like a cut-open Juicy Lucy."



DAVID JOLIS, STAR TRIBUNE

Maybe what the frozen Minnesotan heart really craves is a little validation from our out-of-state neighbors. We want someone, anyone, to acknowledge that, yes, we really do have winters that want to crush our spirits and eat our flesh; that, yes, we have every reason to complain—even if most of us don't.

"So to all the Eriks, the Astrids, and Christens, and Bjorns, and Brynjars, it's okay to show a little displeasure at the clusterfuck of a meteorological hand you've been dealt," Thrillist says.

And really, we might as well. We've earned it. —HANNAH JONES



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From left: Dan "Common Man" Cole, Cory Cove, Chris Hawkey, Dan Barreiro, Paul Allen, and Paul "Meatsauce" Lambert

THE SECRET FORMULA

It's all about "The Bit," that special sauce that powered KFAN to national ratings primacy.

Last fall, 100.3-FM captured the highest market share percentage of any top-50 sports-talk station in the country, according to Nielsen. It was The Bit that transformed the Fan's hosts into local celebrities, weaving the station into the fabric of Minnesota sports culture.

So... what is The Bit?

"I can't explain it," Gregg Swedberg, VP of programming for KFAN parent company iHeart-Media, says with a wily smile. "You either get it or you don't. If you listen to the station, you know The Bit."

The Bit is the lifeblood of KFAN, the pulsating web of in-jokes, phraseology, characters, and

references spread across the station's programming. It's the singular culture of the Fan, honed and perfected by familiar hosts.

When, after a Vikings loss, you hear shards of Paul Allen's exploding heart clink against the mic, that's The Bit. When Dan "Common Man" Cole devotes 30 minutes to Parisian porta-potties, that's The Bit. When listeners self-identify as "rubes," they're flag-waving ambassadors of The Bit.

Tethered together by 100,000 watts, the Bit's evangelists and true believers become family.

"It's this kind of weird locker room," explains Swedberg, who helped launch KFAN in 1991. "There's not anything that goes on that doesn't bleed into the other shows."

The backbone of The Bit: four dynamic, distinct shows that've been liberated from giving a shit about sports.

THE BIT

**HOW KFAN BECAME
AMERICA'S DOMINANT
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BY JAY BOLLER



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BRUCE KLUCKHOHN

"I don't want to wake up and have somebody yell about the same goddamn sports takes," says Cory Cove, co-host of *The Power Trip Morning Show*. "We gave up on that so long ago."

'OUR REAL STATION IS BETTER THAN YOURS, AND YOU'RE GOING TO REALIZE IT'

It wasn't always that way.

In 1989, sports-talk royalty Mike Francesa and Chris "Mad Dog" Russo essentially created the format from dust at New York City's WFAN, where Swedberg happened to work. KFAN staggered out of the gate two years later in the Twin Cities.

"They didn't have powerhouse or memorable shows," says Mark Rosen, former sports director at WCCO-TV and a regular KFAN guest. "They kind of just filled a bunch of airtime."

At first, the programming wasn't fully dedicated to sports. That was Swedberg's idea.

"I just kinda threw it out there," he says. "In truth, for the first five years of the radio station, we didn't really know what we were doing. We made more mistakes at this radio station than anyone I've ever worked for."

KFAN's nucleus of talent solidified throughout the '90s. Chad Hartman, son of legendary *Star Tribune* writer Sid, was a founding member. He teamed with Dan Barreiro, the *Strib's* no-B.S. columnist, in 1992. Cole came aboard in '94, and Allen joined three years later.

Hartman, who was laid off in 2009 amid sweeping budget cuts from debt-saddled iHeartMedia, relished the Wild West atmosphere of early sports-talk. Other Twin Cities stations were "dismissive" of KFAN, he remembers, and WCCO execs weren't shy about express-

Paul Allen: "I still see sports through the eyes of a 15-year-old."

ing that while trying to woo Hartman in the '90s.

"It had this feeling of, 'Well, now do you wanna join the real station?'" he says. "And I was kinda like... 'Bleep them! Our real station is better than yours, and you're going to realize it.'"

Acquiring broadcast rights to Vikings, Wild, Gophers, and (for a time) Timberwolves games helped ratings surge, as did a jump to the FM dial in 2011.

A major coup came in 2015, when *The Power Trip* crew—Cove, Chris Hawkey, and Paul "Meatsauce" Lambert—harpooned the great white whale of Twin Cities morning radio: KQRS' Tom Barnard, whose smug cackles and casual xenophobia had dominated the ratings for decades. Toppling Barnard had been "the whole life mission" for *The Power Trip*, Cove says. Management even joked about a \$1 million bonus for any program that could snatch his throne.

The Power Trip boys celebrated by getting Dairy Queen.

These days, KFAN continues to crush the Twin Cities talk market. Minnesota Public Radio is a distant second, according to recent Nielsen figures. WCCO, once a juggernaut, isn't even close. The Fan wins basically every male demographic, with listenership that skews 90-10 in favor of men, Swedberg estimates.

Recently rebranded as SKOR North, 1500-AM is the only other Twin Cities sports-talker, though its ratings barely register. KFAN bosses say their crosshairs are fixed on top rock formats like KQRS and 93X.

"It's a pretty major example of the sports-talk format in a big city that's operating on all cylinders," says Michael

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Harrison, publisher of Talkers Magazine. "It has top-notch personalities, people that have track records, and diversity. It's not just Xs & Os. It's not just the Big Four sports."

KFAN also has The Bit. The station didn't hit its current gallop until all four marquee programs became fully invested in that ethos.

This isn't Colin Cowherd and his dozens of syndicated sports yakker clones, endlessly bloviating about whether Brady and LeBron are the G.O.A.T. This is savvy, locally geared show business, Swedberg says, and the cross-pollination among shows makes the station feel like a formidable team.

"I don't think anybody, even on their best day, thought it could become what it's become," Barreiro adds. "Originally, for me, it was this cute little add-on. But in the back of my mind I'd hoped it'd become bigger and bigger."

'THAT'S JUST WHO THEY ARE'

From 5:30 a.m. through 6:30 p.m., KFAN listeners experience emotional whiplash from program to program.

"Most sports-talk radio, the personalities are pretty interchangeable," Cove says. "I don't know if any of our guys are interchangeable."

The Power Trip is a good-natured, bro-y, escapist clubhouse, where hosts rap about pop culture, bust each other's chops, and play on-air games (including a recent IQ challenge). Cove is the pessimist, Hawkey the optimist, and Meatsauce the wildcard. Frequent guest Rosen plays the straight man, exasperated by the tornado of dick jokes and madcap improv.

"You don't wanna wake up and go, 'Oh cool, they're arguing about Gary Kubiak.' Who gives a fuck about Gary Kubiak?" Lambert says of the new Vikings assistant

Paul "Meatsauce" Lambert: "You don't wanna wake up and go, 'Oh cool, they're arguing about Gary Kubiak.'"

coach. "I'd rather mispronounce his name and call him Gary Kubrick. That's why those ESPN shows are always changing. You can only yell so much. It's just boring."

Adds Hawkey: "The show only works because the three of us are together. My job is to get up in the morning and make my friends laugh."

The Power Trip hosts are among KFAN's least tenured, which speaks to how entrenched the station's personalities are: Hawkey, a native Hoosier and professional musician, arrived in 2001; Cove (2002) and Lambert (2005), both Minnesotans, came on as interns.

"The continuity is so unique. That doesn't happen," says Hartman, who landed at 'CCO shortly after leaving the Fan. "You have to be good at what you do to last that long."

Paul Allen, on the other hand, absolutely gives a fuck about Gary Kubiak.

The host of *9 to Noon* is KFAN's most devout sports lover, a manic mega-fan who vacillates between all-consuming joy and devastated agony, depending upon the Vikes score.

In '98, Allen replaced Jesse Ventura, the wrestler/actor who'd just shocked the world by becoming governor of Minnesota. ("What am I gonna do if I actually win this thing?" Ventura asked a KFAN producer before the election, per *Sports Illustrated*.) Allen rose within the Fan alongside Jeff Dubay, his co-host who was fired in 2008 after being arrested for cocaine possession.

"I still see sports through the eyes of a 15-year-old," says P.A., a Washington, D.C., native who also announces races at Canterbury Park and serves as the radio



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN

voice of the Vikings. “When it comes to legitimately feeling the losses and the wins, one of the things with which I’ve been blessed has been the ability to genuinely feel.”

Allen conducts his show with the easy-breezy swagger of an R&B singer, referring to guests—male and female—as “honey.” His metaphorical “Therapeutic Davenport of Love” lets Minnesota sports fans plop down for therapy sessions. Fellow hosts rib Allen—who’s friendly with Vikings and Wild brass—about his relentless boosterism.

“It resonates with the fanbases,” he says. “They know I care, and they know I respect that they care.”

By contrast, Dan “Common Man” Cole clearly doesn’t care.

His *Program* is an absurdist playhouse that mocks the very concept of sports-talk. There are no guests, and everything is undergirded by the Detroit native’s winkingly silly, often contrarian, and always amused “esoteric approach.”

Common is a mischievous cat. The notion of sports fandom is his ball of yarn, and he can’t help but playfully ridicule obsessive fans and, quite often, his co-workers. “Cole is a wonderful satirist when he’s cooking,” says Strib columnist Patrick Reusse, a competitor at 1500-AM until getting laid off last year.

Common will diagnose listeners with A.V.A.T.A.R. (Aggravated Vikings Anticipatory Traumatic Abandonment Reaction). He spearheads the annual Preposterous Statement Tournament, wherein laughable hot-takes from his peers are subjected to a bracket-style showdown. Perhaps out of necessity, the lifelong Detroit Lions fan embraces losing with gusto.

“I wanted to do a talk show that’s different, kinda make fun of the whole genre of breaking things down to the minutia,” Cole says. “Plus I’m not good at that. I’m a high

Dan “Common Man” Cole: “I like to wing it, find the odd take. I’m always looking for the laugh.”

school dropout. I like to wing it, find the odd take. I’m always looking for the laugh.”

Growing up in Chicago, Dan Barreiro was obsessed with radio, but he’d take a lengthy detour through newspapers before becoming K-FAN’s drive-time star. “The Big Ticket,” as his K-FAN brethren call him, spent 17 years as a Star Tribune columnist.

Newspapers were initially wary of sharing writers with sports stations, Barreiro

“MY JOB IS TO GET UP IN THE MORNING AND MAKE MY FRIENDS LAUGH.”

says, but he was drawn to the romance of the medium in 1992. He turned out to be a natural.

“My friend Barreiro is dedicated to it,” Reusse says. “I have listened often enough to contend he does one of best radio shows in the country.”

Part of the draw is Barreiro’s magical ability to rant about anything and everything. He dubs his *Bumper to Bumper* program the “combo platter,” and no matter the subject—sports, politics, pop culture, civic to-dos—his powers of impassioned sermonizing have made him a ratings giant.

“Candor is what I try to give ’em,” Barreiro says. “For a lot of people that’s viewed as negativity. I guess I am pretty



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BRUCE KLUCKHOHN

Cory Cove: "Most sports-talk radio, the personalities are pretty interchangeable. I don't know if any of our guys are interchangeable."

tough at times... I might be better after a loss than a victory. That's just the way I'm wired. And most listeners, they don't want Sid [Hartman] radio. A lot of 'em are pretty bright."

Noticeably absent from the Fan: women and people of color. KFAN applied a Band-Aid to that problem last year when Carly Zucker, wife of Wild winger Jason Zucker, began hosting *Overtime*, an interview show that highlights the charity work of athletes. "There needs to be more women," Zucker, the station's first female host in about a decade, told Fox 9. Other than weekend talkers Trent Tucker and Henry Lake, the Fan's stable of talent is also overwhelmingly white.

"Certainly, when we have openings, we don't get as many females applying as males," says station manager Chad Abbott, who started at the Fan in 1995. "We're just trying to represent the Twin Cities the best we can - male, female, young, old."

Additional success will require attracting more women, Swedberg admits.

For now, the men of KFAN succeed, in part, because they're everymen, an apparent rarity in the sports-talk ecosystem.

"I've been around a lot of different levels of media," says Matt Birk, the former Viking and Baltimore Raven from St. Paul. "Sometimes people say, 'So-and-so seems like a great guy,' and I'm like, 'No... he's an asshole.' But those KFAN guys, that's just who they are."

A recurring refrain outsiders hear—and witness first-hand upon visiting the St. Louis Park station—is that Common really

is like that. *The Power Trip* boys really are having that much fun. P.A. really is that euphoric and/or inconsolable. And Barreiro really is that exasperated.

"They don't turn a switch on and become someone different when they're on the radio," Rosen says. "And that's unique. I can truly say that."

FREEDOM FROM SPORTS, FREEDOM FROM MANAGEMENT

On a recent *Saturdays with Sauce*, Lambert relitigated the slaying of Biggie Smalls (tied with Chris Farley's for saddest celeb death, according to Sauce), passionately soapboxed Super Bowl snack ethics (don't be the guy who brings chips, he implores—bring Chinese!), and, almost reluctantly, indulged in some Xs & Os chatter prior to the world's largest sporting event.

Outside of the hardcore sports of Allen's *9 to Noon* show, that's pretty much the norm at the Fan. It's lifestyle radio for guys, featuring ancillary night and weekend programs about the outdoors, video games, and fantasy football. In Minnesota, where snake-bitten fans have been historically subjected to either mediocrity or devastation, diversified subject matter is essential, Abbott reasons.

Plus the hosts wanna have fun. With the cyclical nature of sports—draft, training camp, game previews/recaps, repeat—the monotony can test the patience of host as much as listener.

"They almost proudly disparage sports a little bit," Birk says, adding that Cole "knows nothing" about the subject. (This claim is disputed, but not by Cole). "It's just sports. It's not life or death. The other markets I've been in, it's all sports all the time."

Management encourages the free-wheeling approach, which is uncommon in radio, Barreiro says. Conventional



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN

wisdom dictates that “big, bad corporate radio bosses” stifle freedom more than newspaper bosses. In reality, Barreiro says he experienced more interference from management at the Strib than at KFAN.

“I’m sure if the numbers had sucked, there’d be a lot more pushback from these guys saying, ‘Hey, we love that you wanna talk Leo Tolstoy, but the Vikings are falling apart,’” he says. “We’ve had a unique situation here.”

Adds Cole: “There’s almost no leash at all. We’re like a dog park.”

This sentiment is echoed by almost everyone at the station, and cited as a key to its success. For Swedberg and Abbott, allowing hosts to run unencumbered is a pillar of the strategy. It fosters The Bit.

“It’s pretty clear that management has left the talent alone,” Rosen says. “There’s no, ‘Don’t rip on the Vikings too much because the Wilfs might get upset,’ or ‘Don’t rip on the Wild.’ You’re going to get a pretty brutal dose of honesty.”

THE RUBES ARE FAMILY

Swedberg has never seen a radio station that’s as intimately intertwined with the listenership as KFAN. They get The Bit, he says. They’re part of it.

“It’s not normal,” he chuckles. “It’s this culture, and we’ve been so lucky.”

Aaron Gleeman was a lifelong rube before scoring his own show.

Gleeman is editor in chief of Baseball Prospectus, an analytical website for hardball wonks. He was a prolific Twins blogger/podcaster when he first guested on Allen’s show. Billed as “The Twins Techie,” the St. Paul native is now a 9 to Noon regular, shooting the breeze with P.A. about everything from sabermetrics to Chinese food to his Timberwolves-loving mother. Abbott and Swedberg even turned

In 2015, *The Power Trip Morning Show* toppled KQRS’ Tom Barnard to become the highest rated local morning show.

Gleeman’s podcast, *Gleeman and the Geek*, into a full-blown weekend show.

“Other stations could do things like that, but they don’t. Yet the biggest station does,” Gleeman says. “I think the idea of a ‘KFAN family’ is absolutely right. They like their audience. If they think you can help make good radio, you’re in.”

Before he became a six-time Pro Bowler and Super Bowl champ, Matt Birk was a sports-obsessed rube growing up in St. Paul.

“It’s fun because I’m one of the rubes,” he says. “I love sports, I love talking about it. You can’t talk about politics, you can’t talk about religion, but you can have strong opinions on sports.”

Athletes who claim they don’t listen to sports-talk radio are “lying,” Birk laughs.

With 13 affiliates reaching across the upper Midwest, KFAN provides one of the last town squares, where rubes can gather, squabble, riff, and, most important, feel like they’re part of the club. That’s something the intimacy of radio affords, and it’s not lost on the hosts.

It’s ballooned their social media followings, a flood of rubes referencing everything from that day’s show to some long-forgotten gag.

“There’s a connection with radio—more today than ever before—and I think people have a thirst for that connection,” Rosen says. “Radio offers that more than any other medium, especially this station right now. People feel like we’re really their friends.”

“As pretentious as it sounds,” Barreiro says, “we’re embedded in the local sports pop culture. Because we’ve been allowed to last.” **CF**

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BY JERARD FAGERBERG

When White Claw Hard Seltzer launched in the summer of 2016, sales of spiked seltzer in America quadrupled.

Last year, they reached upward of \$500 million, which is why you saw Bon & Viv's bumping against Bud Light in Super Bowl ad slots. The refreshing, low-sugar beverage now represents 10 percent of all domestic booze sales.

Seltzer has outpaced both hard cider and hard soda, and its booming popularity is a nuclear threat to craft beer's hard-fought market share. Boston Beer Company, maker of Sam Adams, went on the offensive in 2016, launching its Truly Spiked & Sparkling brand. Constellation Brands—which owns Ballast Point, Funky Buddha, and Corona, among others—came out with its own Svedka-branded hard seltzer in mid-2018. Next year, North Carolina stalwart Oskar Blues will join the fray with the Wild Basin imprint.

Instead of Chicken Little-ing or writing seltzer's growth off as a fad, Minnesota beer makers see possibility. Inspired by White Claw and Sam Adams, they're looking at the hard-seltzer gold rush with big, Looney Tunes eyes.

"Seltzers really have taken the industry by storm," says Brad Glynn, co-owner and co-founder of Stillwater's Lift Bridge Brewing Company. Glynn noticed his brewers bringing cases of White Claw to company parties, and it wasn't long until he and his team decided to see if they could steal some market share. In late January, they launched their own line of hard seltzers.

"I know there are big corporations doing them, but how would it look if there was a craft brewery doing it here?" Glynn asks. "There's certainly a market for it. Of course, we don't have the marketing dollars of the bigger brands, but we can start here, locally, and tell our story like we did with beer."

Cold Spring's Third Street Brewhouse was the first local brewery to hop on the seltzer wagon. It launched its Hula portfolio with three island-inspired flavors (Mango Papaya, Pineapple Guava, and Starfruit Dragon Fruit) in July 2017. "Everywhere you look, you'll see a new spiked seltzer entering the market," Third Street brewhouse manager Karl Schmitz said in a press release at the time.

But nearly two years in, the local market is thirsty for more. Glynn sees his oppor-



Lift Bridge's MN-proud flagship is Northwoods Juice Box, a crisp cran-apple blend.

JERARD FAGERBERG

BUBBLING UP

Local breweries are coming to disrupt the \$500 million hard seltzer market

tunity in bringing the flavors back to the Midwest. Lift Bridge's flagship is called Northwoods Juice Box, a crisp combination of cranberry and sweet apple that's sure to delight anyone who grew up on cran-apple La Croix. It's already on tap in the Twin Cities, and it will soon be joined by three more regionally inspired varieties: St. Croix Berries, Voyageur Citrus, and Island Time Tropical Blend. Glynn estimates 6- and 12-packs of cans will be in liquor stores by early April for anyone who wants to double down on local appeal.

"With our beers, we think about our customers, we think about what we would drink, what's quintessential to Minnesota and Wisconsin," Glynn says. "We spent

a lot of time thinking about the different [seltzer] brands that are out there and analyzing what was selling and what wasn't. No one had done a cran-apple, which I thought was crazy."

Bauhaus Brew Labs COO and head brewer Matt Schwandt agrees that hyperfocusing on local is the future of the beverage. "It's analogous to what craft beer started out doing in its infancy, challenging the big brands," Schwandt says. "Given the choice between a mass-produced national brand and a high-quality local brand, 9 times outta 10, they support the local brand. It's the same opportunity here."

But it goes deeper than that. Drinkers are coming to hard seltzer for the light-

ness. Craft stouts and IPAs can range from 200 to 350 calories per beer, and imbibing that much malted sugar leaves drinkers feeling bloated. Eventually, they'll reach for something like a Lift Bridge seltzer—a low-sugar, gluten-free drink with only 120 calories—just to endure the evening.

"What we're seeing in market research is consumers are looking for lighter, slightly healthier beverage options," Schwandt says. "A hard seltzer fits the bill. They're generally lower ABV and lower sugar drinks, and breweries are really well-suited to provide that."

Bauhaus found themselves in the seltzer game by accident, but they were after the same holy grail as overstuffed drinkers. While creating the nonalcoholic version of their ultra-drinkable Homeguys Helles Lager, they ended up with an ethanolized water byproduct. With a little creativity and some lime flavoring, it became the first in their line of seltzers.

Bauhaus's lime seltzer is currently a taproom exclusive, and there are plans to roll out more flavors and potentially cans this summer, but the Northeast brewer is taking a cautious approach. The market is still stabilizing, and there's no guarantee Bauhaus will be able to maintain the quality of the product at a high volume.

To Schwandt's point, Third Street is the only local brewer to achieve any kind of scale in the market, and Hula is poorly regarded among drinkers for its cut-rate chemical taste. Customers have spoken out on Untappd: Hula's three flavors carry an average rating of 2.96, compared to White Claw's average of 3.36. Third Street's marketing department did not respond to questions on the brand's performance by press time.

But ultimately, the market opportunities outweigh the risks. That \$500 million figure is far from hard seltzer's ceiling. The product's appeal is wider than that of beers, especially with women. Seventy percent of hard seltzer drinkers are female, compared to 31.5 percent of craft beer drinkers. That's a bear of a market for craft brewers to grow into. It's not a question of whether or not beer makers should expand into seltzer. It's a matter of how willing they are to pounce.

"By all indicators, [seltzer is] a trend that has some staying power," Schwandt says. "Everybody wants what's new, and the more that you can offer consumers that's new and exciting and different, the better. If we're already set up to produce that, why not?"

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FEB 22 BOTNEK W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	FEB 23 SPACE JESUS W/ BUKU, TOADFACE & MORE 	FEB 28 MATOMA W/ SIGNALA 	MAR 01 RIOT W/ PIXEL TERROR 
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MAR 07 TWO TAILS W/ TEKNICOZ 	MAR 08 PSYMBIONIC W/ THELEM 	MAR 09 ATLIENS W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	MAR 09 WITHIN TEMPTATION W/ IN FLAMES & MORE 
MAR 14 KILL PARIS W/ LOCAL SUPPORT 	MAR 15 BOOGIE T.RIO W/ MERSIV & VAMPA 	MAR 16 CLOVERFEST 2019 W/ MUST DIE! & MANY MORE CLOVERFEST 	MAR 17 THE BLACK QUEEN W/ UNIFORM & SRSQ 
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MAR 23 KEYS N KRATES DJ SET 	MAR 28 T-PAIN 1-UP TOUR 	MAR 29 BARONESS & DEAFHEAVEN W/ ZEAL & ARDOR 	MAR 30 ZOMBOY W/ SPACE LACES & MORE 

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A LIST

FRIDAY Video games galore at the Science Museum p. 21 **SATURDAY** A fancy beer party at Lakes & Legends p. 22 **TUESDAY** *Falsettos* hits high notes p. 23

WEDNESDAY 2.13

COMEDY

CY AMUNDSON

ACME COMEDY CO.

Working as a standup has put comedian Cy Amundson more in tune with what's going on around him. "Every comic is so different in how they perceive stuff and how they write," he notes. "I would say—and I'd say this is true of most any comic—the longer I've been doing it, the stronger my filter is. When I was younger, a joke would come in, and it would take me forever to figure out how to write it, why to write it, and how exactly it should look and sound." And while he finds different things funny as he gets older, he says that could also be true if he were, say, a plumber. "You laugh at different stuff when you're 34 than when you were 24. I just try to talk about whatever is currently happening to me," he adds. "The things that happen when you're older—getting married, buying a house—are different than when you're a dumbass kid." 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18; \$30 Valentine's Day. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. **Through Saturday** —P.F. WILSON

BOOKS

MARLON JAMES

FITZGERALD THEATER

Man Booker Prize-winning author and Macalester College professor Marlon James is back to wow readers with *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*, an epic tale that combines historical fiction, fantasy, and African folklore. This is the first installment of the *Dark Star* trilogy, which centers on the search for a missing boy. Each of the three books will examine the same event from different perspectives, leaving the reader to surmise who is telling the truth and who is lying. The unreliable narrator is a longstanding device in African storytelling, and James takes the position that "if you end up being deceived, that's your problem." As the narrative unfolds, the story winds



Author Marlon James returns with the first in an African fantasy trilogy.

MARK SELIGER

through antiquated cities and vivid landscapes, introducing readers to a ragtag bunch of characters including a human flesh-eater, bloodthirsty hyenas, giants, mermaids, witches, trolls, conjoined twins, and a shape-shifting man-animal. Queerness, gender fluidity, and hot-button topics like female genital mutilation also come into play. While this 600-plus-page tome spiked with graphic violence isn't an easy read, it is a rewarding one. 7 p.m. \$25-\$30; \$50 VIP. 10 E. Exchange St., St. Paul; 651-290-1200. —ERICA RIVERA

THURSDAY 2.14

DRAG

LASHED BUT NOT LEASHED

GUTHRIE THEATER

Martha Graham Cracker—aka Fernando Steven (Dito) Van Reigersberg, co-founder of Pig Iron Theatre Company—is a Philadelphia-based drag performer who has been delighting audiences with a mix of drama, comedy, sass, and song for almost eight years. He calls the "Martha" persona an example of "monster drag," meaning

she's clearly a man (hairy chest and all) presenting as a woman (or should we say parading?). A live band backs up Martha through a zinging evening of diva-driven charm. The name? Van Reigersberg reportedly studied briefly at the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance. The show is the second of three presentations in the Guthrie's Get Used To It: A Celebration of Queer Artistry festival. 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; 10 p.m. Saturday. \$9. 818 S. Second St., Minneapolis; 612-377-2224.

Through Saturday —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 ►

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89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS
SHARON VAN ETEN
REMIND ME TOMORROW TOUR
WITH NILÜFER YANYA

FEB 17
WATSKY
COMPLAINT TOUR
WITH GRIEVES, FEED THE BIIRDS

FEB 21
COLTER WALL
WITH WADE SAPP

FEB 23
GO 95.3 AND 3WAY MARKETING GROUP PRESENT
HEY MA!
A THROWBACK 2000s PARTY
FT. ADVANCE, SOPHIA ERIS

FEB 24
GO 95.3 PRESENTS
ACTION BRONSON
WHITE BRONCO TOUR
WITH ROC MARCIANO, MEYHEM LAUREN

FEB 27
AURORA
WITH TALOS

FEB 28
89.3 THE CURRENT AND CITY PAGES PRESENT
JOHN MAUS
WITH Lukdix

MAR 01
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS
I'M WITH HER
WINTER TOUR 2019
WITH MIPSO

MAR 02
MARDI GRAS IN MPLS FT. COWBOY MOUTH AND DRIVIN' N CRYIN'
WITH JACK BRASS BAND

MAR 03
GO 96.3 PRESENTS
ANDREW MCMAHON
IN THE WILDERNESS
UPSIDE DOWN FLOWERS TOUR
WITH FLOR, GRIZFOLK

MAR 08
YONDER MOUNTAIN STRING BAND AND HORSESHOES & HAND GRENADES
WITH FIRESIDE COLLECTIVE

MAR 10
MIKE DOUGHTY
plays Soul Coughing's *Ruby Vroom* 25th Anniversary Tour
WITH WHEATUS
NIGHT 1 SOLD OUT!

MAR 12
JUNGLE
WITH HOUSES

MAR 16
FLIP PHONE XXL
SPRING BREAK STARRING
FARRAH MOAN
(RuPaul's Drag Race)
WITH PHI PHI O'HARA, TYGRA, VINCENT THE DESTROYER, SUNNY KIRIYAMA

MAR 20
BIG WILD
Superdream Tour
WITH ROBOTAKI, MILD MINDS

MAR 22
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS
BETTER OBLIVION
COMMUNITY CENTER
WITH LALA LALA, CHRISTIAN LEE HUTSON

MAR 25
UNCLE ACID & THE DEADBEATS and GRAVEYARD
Peace Across The Wasteland Tour
WITH DEMOB HAPPY

MAR 29
JESS GLYNNE
WITH ABIR

MAR 30
TREVOR HALL
The Moon Sun Tour
WITH DIRTWIRE

APR 01
EPIK HIGH

APR 02
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS
MOTT THE HOOPLE '74

APR 11
STICK FIGURE
On the Rocks Tour
WITH THE MOVEMENT, THE ELOVATERS

APR 12
KIND COUNTRY
Album Release

APR 18
TIM HEIDECKER AND GREGG TURKINGTON
On Cinema
At The Cinema Live!

7TH ST ENTRY UP NEXT

🏆 BEST CONCERT VENUE
- CITY PAGES 2018

THE FUNK HUNTERS:
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w/ JackLNDN
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

SHAD
w/ SEAN ANONYMOUS
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

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SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

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w/ WEEED
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22

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PALACE THEATRE UP NEXT



FEB 22
BIG HEAD TODD AND THE MONSTERS
W/ BLUE WATER HIGHWAY BAND



FEB 23
BEIRUT
W/ HELADO NEGRO



FEB 24
YOUNG THE GIANT
MIRROR MASTER TOUR
W/ SURE SURE



MAR 04
JAMES BLAKE



MAR 09
THE REVIVALISTS
Take Good Care Tour
W/ RAYLAND BAXTER



MAR 16
VINCE STAPLES:
SMILE, YOU'RE ON CAMERA
W/ JPEGMafia, TRILL SAMMY



MAR 19
BOB WEIR AND WOLF BROS

FINE LINE UP NEXT

SLIPPERY PEOPLE
The Music of TALKING HEADS
w/ MAX GRAHAM & THE FAM
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

MADNESS & MAYHEM TOUR FT. MUSHROOMHEAD
w/ HELLAPOPPIN CIRCUS, SIDESHOW REVUE, VENTANA, WORLDWIDE PANIC
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18

DEAN LEWIS
w/ SYML
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25

CHERRY GLAZERR
w/ PALEHOUND, STRANGE RELATIONS
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

J BOOG
Rose Petals Winter Tour
w/ EarthKry, Eddy Dyno
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27

ASTRALBLAK
w/ LADY MIDNIGHT, NAZEEM & SPENCER JOLES, DJ SARAH WHITE
FRIDAY, MARCH 1

TURF CLUB UP NEXT

MEG KIRSCH
Street Cat EP RELEASE
w/ CON DAVISON, ORCHID EATON
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

HUDSON TAYLOR
w/ CRAIG STICKLAND
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 14

THE PRIZEFIGHTERS
Firewalk ALBUM RELEASE
w/ UMBRELLA BED, DOWN N'N DIRTY DANCEHALL, DJ MISS UPSETTER
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15

JOE PUG
w/ HALLEWAY
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16

THEM EVILS
w/ XIII ARROWS, CHAD ERICKSON & THE UNTIMELY
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17

ILLUMINATI HOTTIES
w/ HALF TRAMP, PRATHLOONS
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 18

LE BUTCHERETTES
w/ STARS AT NIGHT, NOVACRON
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

BLACK ROCK MATTERS
FT. BLVCK MADONNA, THE SMOKEs, TIMISAROCKER, ATHEREAL ROSE
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

AROUND TOWN

RKCB & SHOFFY:
See For Yourself Tour
w/ SATELLITE MODE
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15

TOKEN
Between Somewhere Tour
w/ KUR
AMSTERDAM BAR & HALL
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20

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&
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JUNE 29

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AUG 09

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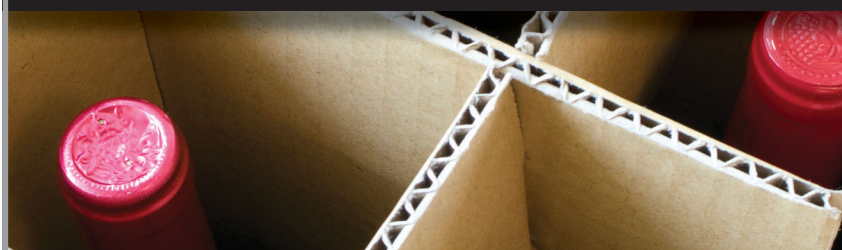
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A-LIST



The Walker makes art easy to love this V-Day.

EDWARD HOPPER, OFFICE AT NIGHT

CONTINUED FROM THURSDAY ►

BARHOPPING

DIVE BAR PRIX FIXE DINNER

BULL'S HORN FOOD AND DRINK

Valentine's Day doesn't have to be about flowers, chocolate, and stuffed animals. Sometimes the best way to a person's heart is with unpretentious, tasty food. There's a reason that reservations to White Castle on this day sell out and pizzas lovingly shaped into hearts remain popular. Bull's Horn, a neighborhood beer joint, is getting in on a little V-Day action as well, offering a prix fixe dinner geared toward low-key lovers, BFFs, and anyone else who is hungry. For \$12 (\$24 if you're rolling big and picking up the tab), you'll be treated to a three-course meal of bar food. For round one you can choose between chicken wings and cheese curds. The second course is a burger and chips, and the meal ends with the dessert choice of school cafeterias everywhere: pudding. Plunk down another \$8 (or \$16 if you're not going Dutch) for a bubble pairing where you can down a Miller High Life 40 or split a bottle of Ruffino Prosecco. 3 to 9 p.m. \$12 per person. 4563 S. 34th Ave., Minneapolis; 612-208-1378. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

COMEDY

BEN GLEIB

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

Ben Gleib has tried dialing back the political bits in his act, saving that material for his podcast, *Last Week on Earth*. However, last summer at a gig in Chicago, he was compelled to dive back in. He was telling a joke about women making duck faces in photographs, and followed it with a line about how we elected a president who looks like a duck. A woman in the audience wasn't having it and yelled, "Don't talk about the Donald." Gleib hadn't planned to make any more jokes about Trump, but

things took a turn. "Don't talk about the Donald?" he responded. "Oh, I'm sorry. I thought this was America, how weird." He then proceeded to do another five minutes on the president and freedom of speech. So watch out, hecklers. "I'm doing more improv and crowd work in my act," he says. "People coming to see me should see a different show every night. It's not that weighty to think about." Well, that's the case on most nights. 16+. 7:30 p.m. Thursday through Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$16-\$23; special Valentine's packages available. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday** —P.F. WILSON

ART/MUSEUM

FIVE WAYS IN: THEMES FROM THE COLLECTION

WALKER ART CENTER

Anyone who has ever struggled with understanding or appreciating art may find the perfect way in here. This exhibition, drawn from the Walker's collections, is organized by galleries into five sections: self (portraits), inside (the interior domain), outside (landscape), everyday (still life), and everything (abstraction). The words may be quotidian, but the artwork isn't. And yet, whether a piece is by a modern master or young innovator, the paintings, sculpture, drawings, photos, and video work presented here demonstrate how artists continue to reinvent genres and look for unconventional approaches to investigating the ordinary. See it first at Thursday night's Winter at the Walker event, which will include author readings, tours, a movie screening, and more from 5 to 9 p.m. 725 Vineland Place, Minneapolis; 612-375-7600. **Through September 19, 2021** —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

Commuting monsters need love too.



JOHN SAUER, *ANOTHER DAY AT THE FISH STICK FACTORY*

BARHOPPING CASKS & CANDY

INSIGHT BREWING

This Valentine's Day, Insight will be offering a variety of bubbly... beer. So if you and your sweetie prefer pints to flutes, this event is for you. Throughout the day the brewpub will be tapping a mix of their classic beers with a fruity twist. The tart Troll Way already has notes of peach and lemon, but this Thursday they'll be adding mango to the mix. Saison Sunken City already packs a punch with a high ABV thanks to its use of sauvignon blanc grapes. Now it'll be amped up even more with raspberries. Finally, brut IPA Lovely Vision has a date with peaches. There will be free candy to snack on, and J+D Foods will be stopping by, too. 4 to 10 p.m. Free. 2821 E. Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-722-7222. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

FRIDAY 2.15

BARHOPPING 6 YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY

612BREW

Northeast Minneapolis beer hall 612Brew is celebrating turning six with a multi-day birthday party. Each day will feature a variety of happenings and deals. Special beer releases include the Unrated After Dark Black IPA on Friday, and the Seven Second Dance Party MPLS Style IPA and Passion Fruit Seven Second Dance Party on Saturday. Red Wagon Pizza and J+D Foods will offer a menu infused with 612Brew selections. Saturday's offerings include special tours with doughnuts from Glam Doll, freebies and flight specials, a free beer hour from 5 to 6 p.m., and a dance party until close. 2:30 p.m. to midnight Friday; noon to midnight Saturday. Free. 945 Broadway St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-930-4606. **Through Saturday** —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

ART/GALLERY UNLOVED CREATURES

ROGUE BUDDHA GALLERY

For Valentine's Day weekend, Rogue Buddha has a special exhibit in store. The show's conceit is that all creatures—even nasty and scary ones—are deserving of love. Come for Heather Renaux's forlorn fairies, Alex Kuno's naughty country maids, Eli Libson's interstellar space monsters, and John Sauer's desolate fighter pilots. The works are a mix of titillating kitsch and melancholy whimsy, with a side of frightening sad sacks. There will be an opening reception on Friday, February 15, from 7 to 11 p.m. Free. 357 13th Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-331-3889.

Through March 13 —SHEILA REGAN

MUSEUM GAME CHANGERS

SCIENCE MUSEUM OF MINNESOTA

The Science Museum's latest exhibition, "Game Changers," will turn the space into a 10,000-square-foot arcade loaded with 100 playable games, including rare machines from the '70s and '80s and a giant dance game setup. You'll also learn a bit about the history of video-game creation thanks to a retrospective covering over 40 years and 30 designers. There will be rare concept artwork, creator interviews, and interactive stations exploring things like game music, design, and more. The show breaks things down into three categories: The Arcade Heroes (landmark games like Space Invaders, Pac-Man, Asteroids), the Game Changers (unexpected and influential hits like Diablo III, LEGO Batman 3, Rock Band 3, Sonic the Hedgehog), and the Indies (games that made it big without massive early backing, such as Angry Birds, Minecraft, and Castle Crashers). You'll be able to play them all for the price of museum admission. 120 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul; 651-221-9444.

Through May 5 —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ►

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SAT, MAR 2



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FRI, MAR 8



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SAT, MAR 9



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SAT, MAR 16



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UPCOMING:

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MARCH 30 ..TOMMY CASTRO AND THE PAINKILLERS
with guest **COREY STEVENS**

APRIL 5 ..BLUE OYSTER CULT
with guest **THE TUBES** feat. **FEE WAYBILL**

APRIL 13 ..TRILOGY: Tribute To The Doors, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd

APRIL 27 ..DELBERT McCLINTON
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A-LIST

SATURDAY

ART/GALLERY

OF THE NORTH: JACOB AARON SCHROEDER

PUBLIC FUNCTIONARY

Stories of LGBTQ mental health, queer identity, homophobia, and toxic masculinity are fused in St. Paul artist Jacob Aaron Schroeder's first solo exhibition. An installation of mixed-media and sculptural work, the exhibition functions—conceptually and, in many ways, literally—as a sort of altar to gender non-conforming, transgender, and queer experiences. Schroeder conducted his research in St. Paul, St. Cloud, and Virginia, combining narratives both urban and rural. The result illuminates object, place, and space to reveal the pain and poetry of lives lived. There will be an opening reception from 7 to 11 p.m. Saturday, February 16, and an artist's conversation at 1 p.m. on Saturday, February 23. Free. 1400 12th Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-978-5566. **Through March 9 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE**



JACOB AARON SCHROEDER, MY SADNESS IS SHOWING

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

THEATER

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR

THEATRE IN THE ROUND

When Russian playwright Nikolai Gogol crafted *The Government Inspector* in 1836, he probably didn't envision a day when the play's depiction of shameless avarice and buffoonery could be perceived as anything but satire. As it stands, contemporary audiences can ponder the uncanny parallels between the 19th-century farce and our 21st-century reality when Theatre in the Round Players mounts the production. *The Government Inspector* focuses on a disgraced former clerk who finds himself mistaken for the titular figure, an official assigned to investigate corruption in a small village. The bizarre turn of fortune leads the impersonator into a series of surreal encounters with a motley procession of crooked politicians, enablers, and preening would-be consorts, all angling to curry favor with a man who has no actual authority. Paced with a madcap energy in keeping with an anarchic spirit, this modern adaption by Jeffrey Hatcher should resonate with audiences. 7:30 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$18-\$22. 245 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis; 612-333-3010. **Through March 10 —BRAD RICHASON**

SATURDAY 2.16

BEER

ST. GAILA PARTY

LAKES & LEGENDS BREWING COMPANY

With soothing sweet honey and a tart raspberry finish, St. Gail Raspberry Honey Ale is a bright and colorful reminder that things aren't always dreary in winter. At the first-ever St. Gaila Party, Lakes & Legends has brewed up four variations to debut throughout the day, and there will be a best-dressed competition for those with a flair for fashion. Gastrotruck has a custom menu designed for St. Gail pairings, and the Minneapolis Craft Market will be selling locally made goods. When visiting, don't forget: Lakes & Legends validates for parking discounts at the LPM and Hyatt ramps. 6 p.m. to midnight. Free. 1368 LaSalle Ave., Minneapolis; 612-999-6020. **—LOREN GREEN**

COMEDY

ROBERT BARIL

SISYPHUS BREWING

A few years ago, Robert Baril realized that he wasn't writing from the heart. "The comedians I idolized never really talked about themselves," he explains. "They just did jokes about current events, and that's the kind of stuff that I liked and thought I could do. But I realized that I was writing jokes that I thought those guys would write, instead

of being myself." In the two years that have passed since the release of his debut album, *Sex and Politics*, Baril has started to let the audience learn more about him, including his love life and his new role as a step-grandpa (he got engaged this past July). "I've always been a grandpa at heart," he says. "I could spend all day drinking coffee, reading the newspaper, watching World War II documentaries, and complaining about things. Marrying a grandma and becoming an acting step-grandpa really isn't that much of an adjustment." This week, he'll record a new album of material at Sisyphus, but he hasn't completely abandoned his political material. "I still like to talk about whatever the hot-button topics are in the world right now, but I don't really need to be super opinionated about them," he says. "Whether it's the military or marriage equality, I talk about things in a way that means they'll have a longer lifespan then having to remember the political punchline of the day." 7:30 and 9:30 p.m. \$10. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Ste. 100, Minneapolis; 612-444-8674. **—PATRICK STRAIT**

PARTY

SPEARWAVE V3.N1/ GRAND OPENING

SOOMAAL HOUSE OF ART

Soomaal House of Art is getting new digs. The arts organization, which showcases work by Somali artists, has been hosting events and exhibitions around the Twin Cities since forming in 2016. These happenings have been held at local mosques, art galleries, community centers, and libraries. Now Soomaal will have its own space to call home. The grand opening takes place in conjunction with the reception for Soomaal's latest exhibition, which will include a new portrait series by artist Yasmin Yassin, as well as work by graphic designer and visual artist Kaamil A. Haider. For Soomaal's discussion series, Spearwave, Yassin and Haider will be joined by poet/playwright Abdi Phenomenal and poet Khadija Charif, who will also perform. 5 to 9 p.m. Free. 2200 Minnehaha Ave., #200, Minneapolis; 612-220-3089. **—SHEILA REGAN**

SUNDAY 2.17

BARHOPPING

BARREL AGED WEEK

TOWN HALL BREWERY

Town Hall has been barrel-aging beers for 18 years now, and even managed to win an award for Czar Jack imperial stout before barrel-aged beer had its own category. The brewpub's barrel program



IMAGE FROM THE BROADWAY COMPANY

continues to grow, and this week's festival points the spotlight directly at their big, bold, and complex creations. That will include offerings like Manhattan Reserve, Twisted Trace, ET Wee, and Foolish Angel. The week kicks off with growler presales, where Town Hall will reward those who wait in line with free coffee and cheap breakfast burritos. Then they'll release more beers each day. This event also features two one-week-only menu items, two chef-driven beer and dinner pairings, and a limited supply of bourbon barrel-aged maple syrup for sale to take home. Show up early to reserve some growlers, and return throughout the week for more beer. 1430 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-339-8696

Through February 24 —LOREN GREEN

TUESDAY 2.19

THEATER FALSETTOS

ORDWAY CENTER
FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Falsettos, a musical by William Finn and James Lapine, was ahead of its time when it premiered in 1992, with a story centering on the emotional bonds among a gay man named Marvin, his lover, his ex-wife, and his young son. Underscored by evocative musical numbers, the narrative radiates empathy for marginalized characters who will never possess the luxury of supposed normalcy. *Falsettos'* 2016 Broadway revival by Lincoln Center Theater proved a critical and popular hit, amassing five Tony Awards. Twin Cities audiences will now have a chance to appreciate that same heralded staging when the touring production (lead by Broadway standouts Nick Adams, Eden Espinosa, and Max von Essen) makes a stop at the Ordway. Even as the social progress of recent years is assailed by bigotry, *Falsettos* revels in an emancipation from such intolerance, proposing that families are founded on love and acceptance. 7:30 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday; 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. \$48-\$117. 345 Washington St., St. Paul; 651-224-4222. Through Sunday —BRAD RICHASON

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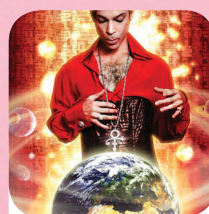
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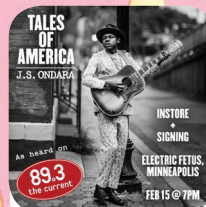
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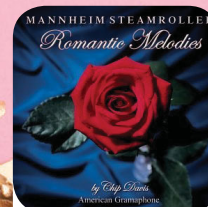
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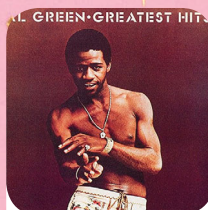
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FILM

CYBORG LOVE

Sick fights and sickly romance in *Alita: Battle Angel*



COURTESY TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX TM & © 2018 TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX FILM CORPORATION

BY TONY LIBERA

James Cameron is responsible for some of the most iconic action sci-fi movies in history, so no matter how you feel about *Avatar*, anything with his name on it deserves a chance. That said, Cameron's latest project, *Alita: Battle Angel*, is more miss than hit.

Adapted from the Yukito Kishiro manga *Battle Angel Alita*, this sprawling epic about a futuristic cyborg warrior spent years in development hell before Cameron gave the director's chair over to Robert Rodriguez. That may be one of the reasons *Alita* feels a bit scatterbrained, the other being just how much material from the books is crammed into a 122-minute runtime.

The movie opens on Dr. Dyson Ido (Christoph Waltz), a scientist who discovers a limbless Alita (Rosa Salazar) buried in a scrapyard. After rebuilding her, Ido finds she has amnesia and assumes the role of father figure. Though he tries to shield his proxy daughter from some of the city's harsher realities, it becomes

clear that Alita is more dangerous than anything out in the streets.

Between the requisite world-building, a subplot about a bounty hunter, the introduction of a sport called motorball, Martian super soldiers, a mysterious Big Bad, and a love story, *Alita* has a lot going on. Rodriguez typically fares better at action than characterization, so it's no surprise that the battle and sports scenes stand out here. The motorball sequences play like dazzling *Final Fantasy* cutscenes, and *Alita* dishes out some top-notch ass-kicking, so depending on your taste, those elements might be worth the price of admission. And yet the story in between, though it follows *Battle Angel Alita*, still feels like filler between fights—a shame since Kishiro's universe is so intriguing. Beyond brawls, *Alita* feels like a letdown.

What's more, the romance between Alita and a street rat named Hugo (Keanu Johnson) almost ruins the movie completely. Sure, it's refreshing to see a male love interest getting in our protagonist's way by being a worthless idiot, but the dynamic has seemingly no basis, and Ali-

ALITA: BATTLE ANGEL

directed by Robert Rodriguez
area theaters, now open

ta's infatuation becomes more and more nonsensical as Hugo's scumbaggery reveals itself. She literally tries to give him her heart, so he can sell it for a whole bunch of money and achieve his dreams of going to a fancy floating city in the sky. While the love story does track with Kishiro's source material, Cameron has written iconic heroines in *Terminator 2*'s Sarah Connor and *Alien*'s Ripley, so it feels like he could have and should have given *Alita* a 21st-century revision.

The movie ends on a massive cliffhanger, which is a pretty bold and somewhat shitty move for an introductory outing. Imagine if the original *Star Wars* ended when Obi-Wan Kenobi dies, before Luke destroys the Death Star. That's what you have here, but even less climactic. Barring box-office catastrophe we'll have another entry into this universe. Here's hoping round two can utilize *Alita*'s full potential. **C+**

BENEVOLENCE

Bayeza's powerful lynching trilogy
moves on to part two

Talvin Wilks directs
benevolence at Penumbra.



COURTESY OF PENUMBRA THEATRE

BY JAY GABLER

Penumbra Theatre's upcoming play is titled *benevolence*, all in lowercase. Why lowercase?

"It came out that way in my typewriter," says playwright Ifa Bayeza. "I think that was, poetically, because there is a question. A small-b *benevolence* is more tentative than a capital B. Can it be granted? Is it possible to get to that level of grace when confronting some of the horrors of our racial history?"

The play is the second part of a trilogy about events surrounding the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till, a brutal hate crime that became emblematic of the systemic violence perpetrated on African-Americans.

In a way, you could think of *benevolence* as the third part of the trilogy. "As it turns out, I wrote the third play second," says Bayeza. "So we're actually doing the third play, *benevolence*. Penumbra has committed to doing all three, so *That Summer in Sumner* will be coming up."

The production will be directed by Talvin Wilks, who helmed the Penumbra production of the trilogy's first play, *The Ballad of Emmett Till*, in 2014. That play had its origins elsewhere, but Penumbra's artistic director, Sarah Bellamy, committed to producing the next two plays as well, making this the world premiere of *benevolence*.

While *The Ballad of Emmett Till* centered on the 14-year-old boy himself, *benevolence*


BENEVOLENCE

Penumbra Theatre
270 N. Kent St., St. Paul
Through March 10; 651-224-3180

examines broader events surrounding the attack, contrasting the experiences of the white couple responsible for Till's death with a black couple who are afraid to come forward as witnesses.

"It's a very different approach to a similar landscape of storytelling," says Wilks. "She's showing us this culture of terrorism, [of] keeping black people in their place through acts of violence. *The Ballad of Emmett Till* built the story of Emmett. This, now, expands to deal with the actual culture that created such an environment where such an act would take place."

The new plays are highly anticipated given the praise for *The Ballad of Emmett Till* and Bayeza's storied history in theater and literature. She is the sister of, and was a collaborator with, the pathbreaking playwright Ntozake Shange, whose *for colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf* (1976) was staged in a powerful new production at Penumbra in 2018.

Wilks, who's writing a history of African-American theater from the 1960s to the present, says that Bayeza "is very much woven into that history. In my mind, she's part of the foundation of these groundbreaking works that lead us from the Black Arts Movement to the present day." 

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HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Tyler Michaels-King Photo by Allen Weeks

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

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STREET *Style*

LOVERS & FRIENDS A pre-Valentine's dance party at Muse Event Center on Saturday, February 9 **BY AMY GEE**



SERNICIA LEWIS

45, BARBER

What are you wearing?

Nine West boots, vintage jeans, A.W.A.K.E. jacket, GoJane shirt, BCBG belt, AKIRA earrings.

Describe your style:

I just go with the flow.

Current style crush:

@kahlanabarfield on Instagram.

One thing in your closet you can't live without:

Alexander Wang boots.



NEEKA JACKSON

29, DJ

What are you wearing?

Jacket and shirt from Bar III, Forever 21 pants, Comme des Garçons x Nike shoes, Nike sports bra, glasses from Tilly's.

Describe your style:

Comfort, ghetto chic, street chic.

Current style crush:

Krystle Kastlez.

One thing in your closet you can't live without:

My black biker jacket.



JEAN PIERRE GASTON

28, HOMEMAKER

What are you wearing?

Givenchy shoes, Chanel bag, Dsquared2 blazer.

Describe your style:

Fun, outgoing, energetic, ghetto chic.

Current style crush:

Me.

One thing in your closet you can't live without:

My Birkin.



ASHE JAAFARU

25, ACTIVIST, ARTIST

What are you wearing?

Dress from \$10 Rack, thrifted fur coat, H&M hat, Public Desire shoes, necklace from Macy's.

Describe your style:

Pop out.

Current style crushes:

Rico Nasty, my younger sister, Lupita Nyong'o.

One thing in your closet you can't live without:

My black bodysuit.

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- 3.3 JESSIE AND THE JINX (ASHEVILLE, NC), MAGNETIC GHOST, THE KEYS TO SUCCESS
- 3.8 RECKLESS ONES
- 3.9 MALAMANYA
- 3.17 THE DOLLYROTS

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BY DAVID CHIU

J.S. Ondara first experienced below-freezing weather in February 2013, when his flight from Nairobi landed in Minnesota. “I walked out of the airport, and then I walked right back in,” he recalls. “I’m like, ‘What’s this invisible flame that’s burning me inside and out?’ So the first thing I had to deal with was finding my way around and getting used to the winter, questioning myself for a second, ‘Hmm... do I really want to be here?’”

But there was no going back. The aspiring folk singer had long wanted to travel to America, where he felt his music would be more accepted than in Kenya—his performance attire, including a fedora, even evokes look of an American troubadour of yesteryear. He specifically chose to live in Minnesota to follow in the footsteps of his hero, Bob Dylan.

Six years later, Ondara is releasing a full-length debut album, *Tales of America*, a showcase of his expressive singing, shimmering guitar, and impressionistic lyrics that document one immigrant’s experiences in America. Ondara will headline his own U.S. tour in the States beginning next month, which includes a stop at the Entry. “It’s why I came here,” he says. “It took that long to get all the ducks in a row, going out there and playing songs, and then working on them over and over again.”

Ondara originally wrote about 100 songs for *Tales of America*; 11 made it to the album. “The title of the record guided me a lot,” he says. “It was just this vision that I had for it. I had all the songs written with that sort of theme and title.” And whether directly or allegorically, these songs comment with poignance on his new home. On “God Bless America,” an original composition, he sings, “Will you let me in, or are you at capacity/ Will you set me free, are you holding onto history.” The haunting a capella “Turkish Bandana” depicts the harsh reality of seeking a better life abroad: “You thought, you would be/Some kind of news maker/But now you’re still/A factory worker.”

The album opens with the soulful “American Dream,” whose lyrics could be interpreted as either an observation or critique of American society today. “It was me trying to process what that idea meant,” Ondara says. “What is the ‘American Dream’ for Americans and for immigrants alike? Sometimes you move here from places far away. And then you get to the county and you find the country in turmoil. What’s the

IMMIGRANT SONG

On his debut album, Kenya-raised singer-songwriter J.S. Ondara searches for America



J.S. Ondara

JOSH CHEUSE

dream or what’s left of it? It was me trying to process what that is and how that relates to an outsider’s point of view who’s just observing and experiencing it.”

As a boy in Nairobi, Ondara was raised on a lot of the same rock music as his American contemporaries: Radiohead, Death Cab for Cutie, Nirvana. He didn’t play an instrument because he couldn’t afford one, but he wrote songs anyway. And then, in his late teens, he was introduced to Dylan—thanks to Guns N’ Roses. Ondara and a fellow student got into an argument over who wrote “Knockin’ on Heaven’s Door,” which Ondara only knew from the G N’ R cover, and this led him to *The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan*. “It was very raw and different from anything that I

heard before,” he recalls, “and that sort of carried me away. The music took hold of me, but I was also captured by his journey as a person, and his persona.”

An inspired Ondara decided to seek his fortune in Dylan’s home state. “Soon after I listened to *Freewheelin’*, I made this decision that I will defy everything and try to become a singer and sing folk songs. I was looking for ways to make my way to America. One of the first things I did was apply to go to the University of Minnesota. I thought that would be an easy way to get to Minnesota.” He laughs, then adds, “That didn’t work.”

Undeterred, Ondara made the trip anyway. He moved in with an aunt in Minneapolis, where he came across an abandoned

guitar and developed his playing style. He performed at open mics and coffee houses, but didn’t seem to be getting anywhere. His concerned family intervened. “I sort of succumbed to the pressures around me, where everyone’s like, ‘I told you it wasn’t gonna work. So go to school now,’” he says. “I enrolled in school and went in studying music therapy, [telling] myself, ‘It’s still music. It’s fine.’”

Then a friend invited him to check out a concert in town by the Seattle-based singer-songwriter Noah Gundersen. It was the first show that Ondara had ever paid to see. “I had this magnificent spiritual experience at that show listening to Noah and was so moved,” he recalls. “I was like, ‘OK, that’s it. That’s what I want to do.’ The following day I dropped out of school and went back to the open mics, playing shows—just doing it and recording songs until things took shape at some point.”

Ondara’s big break came when 89.3 the Current discovered his music. One day, a friend called the singer at his temp job. “He was like, ‘Hey, you’re on the radio!’ I’m like, ‘Well what do you mean I’m on the radio? I’m right here. What are you talking about?’ ‘No, you’re on the radio!’ I ended up finding out that the Current went to my YouTube, ripped my song, and played it.”

The country Ondara first arrived in six years ago has changed a lot since then, with a president who reportedly once called African nations “shithole countries” encouraging division over immigration along partisan lines. “I’m pretty grateful that I get to do this, but I am conscious that we are in tumultuous times,” Ondara says. “So I do grapple over that. I hope that by singing folk songs and speaking about things that affect me and other immigrants and Americans at large, that I can in some way contribute to moving us together to a better place.”

After traveling all that way to become a folk musician in America, did Ondara find what he was looking for? “I think I found parts of it, which is this record,” he says. “But the whole picture is not complete yet. I don’t know

where the other pieces go. I think we’ll just keep figuring it out together as we move along. Speak with me in a year, and I might have something to say about that.”

J.S. ONDARA

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Friday, Feb. 22 8 pm Momentary Lapse of Floyd A Tribute to Pink Floyd Synced to Film	Friday, Feb. 15 7:30 pm Black (2018) Q & A to Follow
Saturday, Feb. 23 8 pm Paris 1919, Flavor Crystals & American Cream	Saturday Matinee, Feb. 16 1 pm The Karate Kid (1984) Digital
	Thursday, Feb. 21 7:30 pm The Road Warrior (1981) 35mm Presentation

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MUSIC CRITICS' PICKS

SHAD

7TH ST. ENTRY, THURSDAY 2.14

Born in Kenya and bred in Ontario, Shad is synonymous with consciousness and positivity in rap—sometimes he sounds like an underground Common. He's one of Canada's hip-hop heroes, thrice nominated for the Polaris Music Prize. You may have also seen him hosting the Emmy-winning *Hip-Hop Evolution*, and even if Shad hasn't made the same impact as some of the legends he interviewed for the docuseries, down-to-earth but purposeful MCs like him are essential to the breadth of rap. 18+. 7 p.m. \$15. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN

FIDLAR

FINE LINE MUSIC CAFE, FRIDAY 2.15

Los Angeles' FIDLAR (whose name is an acronym for "Fuck It, Dog, Life's a Risk") have grown from scrappy skate-punks to an over-the-top band with apparent arena ambitions, while the once alarmingly hard-partying frontman Zac Carper has achieved sobriety. Their new, third album, *Almost Free*, continues their evolution with big hooks, big riffs, and big beats, but even with mixing and mastering from pop vets, it's still more charmingly chaotic than slick. With France Camp. 18+. 8 p.m. \$25/\$35. 318 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8100. —MICHAEL MADDEN

TRIPPIE REDD

MYTH, FRIDAY 2.15

Countless young rappers are already mimicking Trippie Redd, but it wasn't that long ago that the 19-year-old Ohio native was brand-new, establishing himself as a leader of the SoundCloud rap wave. His wild sing-rapping, partly emo and partly psychedelic, immediately became one of the most distinct and melodic styles in rap. And despite some immature internet antics (like arguing with super-troll Tekashi 6ix9ine), Trippie is also one of the genre's hardest-working young stars, releasing four full-length projects since 2017. 8:30 p.m. \$39.50. 3090 Southlawn Dr., Maplewood; 651-779-6984. —MICHAEL MADDEN

FASHAWN

7TH ST. ENTRY, MONDAY 2.18

A decade ago, Fresno MC Fashawn emerged as a promising newcomer, a Golden Age revivalist who released a full-length tribute to Nas' *Illmatic* two months after landing on the XXL Freshman cover in 2010. He's remained relatively underground, but as one of the most consistent artists on Nas' Mass Appeal Records, he's had a solid run. He's currently headlining Mass Appeal's "Starting Five" tour, joined by Stro, Ezri, Cantrell, and 070 Phi. 18+. 7:30 p.m. Free with RSVP. 701 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. —MICHAEL MADDEN





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Feb 16	The Bill Patten Trio	9:45pm - 1am
Feb 17	Doug Otto & Friends	5pm - 8pm

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BOY DIRT CAR/ CHINESE UFO'S/ HEIROGRAPHIC HOLOGYPHS	

>> *By Rob Brezsny*

♉ TAURUS (April 20–May 20): In accordance with astrological omens, I invite you to create your own royal throne and sit on it whenever you need to think deep thoughts and formulate important decisions. Make sure your power chair is comfortable as well as beautiful and elegant. To enhance your ability to wield your waxing authority with grace and courage, I also encourage you to fashion your own crown, scepter, and ceremonial footwear. They, too, should be comfortable, beautiful, and elegant.

69 CANCER (June 21-27): A study by the Humane Research Council found that more than 80 percent of those who commit to being vegetarians eventually give up and return to eating meat. A study by the National Institute of Health showed that only about 36 percent of alcoholics are able to achieve full recovery; the remainder relapse. And we all know how many people make New Year's resolutions to exercise more often, but then stop going to the gym by February. That's the bad news. The good news, Cancerian, is that during the coming weeks you will possess an enhanced power to stick with any commitment you know is right and good for you. Take advantage!

♊ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Virgo basketball star Latrell Sprewell played professionally for 13 years. He could have extended his career at least three more seasons, but he turned down an offer for \$21 million from the Minnesota team, complaining that it wouldn't be sufficient to feed his four children. I will ask you not to imitate his behavior, Virgo. If you're offered a deal or opportunity that doesn't perfectly meet all your requirements, don't dismiss it out of hand. A bit of compromise is sensible right now.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A study published in the journal *Social Psychology and Personality Science* suggests that people who use curse words tend to be more candid. "Swearing is often inappropriate but it can also be evidence that someone is telling you their honest opinion," said the lead researcher. "Just as they aren't filtering their language to be more palatable, they're also not filtering their views." If that's true, Scorpio, I'm going to encourage you to curse more than usual in the coming weeks. According to my analysis of the astrological omens, it's crucial that you tell as much of the whole truth as is humanly possible. (P.S. Your cursing outbursts don't necessarily have to be delivered with total abandon everywhere you go. You could accomplish a lot just by going into rooms by yourself and exuberantly allowing the expletives to roll out of your mouth.)

♈ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Mongolia is a huge landlocked country. It borders no oceans or seas. Nevertheless, it has a navy of seven sailors. Its lone ship is a tugboat moored on Lake Khovsgol, which is three percent the size of North America's Lake Superior. I'm offering up the Mongolian navy as an apt metaphor for you to draw inspiration from in the coming weeks. I believe it makes good astrological sense for you to launch a seemingly quixotic quest to assert your power, however modestly, in a situation that may seem out of your league.

X PISCES (Feb. 19–March 20): According to the Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology, the word "obsession" used to refer to the agitated state of a person who was besieged by rowdy or unruly spirits arriving from outside the person. "Possession," on the other hand, once meant the agitated state of a person struggling against rowdy or unruly spirits arising from within. In the Western Christian perspective, both modes have been considered primarily negative and problematic. In many other cultures, however, the concepts of "obsession" and "possession" have been regarded as relatively benevolent, and their effect quite positive. As long as you don't buy into the Western Christian view, I suspect that the coming weeks will be a favorable time for you to consort with spirits like those . . .

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SAVAGE LOVE

The Doll

How do I find a woman
who's sexually interested
in persons with
disabilities?



Dan Savage

I am a 56-year-heterosexual man, and I have lived with ALS for the past six years. I am either in a wheelchair or in a hospital bed, and I have very little motor ability in my limbs. Like most or all male ALS patients, I still have full sensory ability, including a fully functioning penis. Are there safe websites or groups I can connect with that deal with helping paralytics like me find people who are interested in hooking up? I'm talking about people who have a fetish for paralytics. It would be cool if someone was into the whole bathing, grooming, dressing thing, and whatever baby-doll fantasy they might have. Hell, I'd be happy if someone just wanted to give me a pity fuck!

REALISTIC ABOUT GETTING
DOMINATED OR LUSTFULLY LAID

"I struggled to find any specific online groups with respect to ALS and sexuality," said Andrew Gurza, a disability awareness consultant and the host of *Disability After Dark*, a terrific podcast that explores and celebrates the sexual agency and desirability of people with disabilities. "But what RAGDOLL is looking for might not be directly related to his specific disability. It sounds like he is looking to engage with a community of people called 'devotees.' These individuals are attracted to people primarily because of their disabilities, and that might be what he is looking for."

If you're open to playing with a devotee, RAGDOLL, Gurza suggests checking out Paradevo (paradevo.net), a website for "female devotees and gay male devotees" of disabled men.

"Many disabled people have also set up profiles on sites like FetLife to explore not only their fetishistic sides, but also how their disabled identities can complement and play a role in that," said Gurza.

Now, many people, disabled and otherwise, look down on devotees, who are often accused of fetishizing disability and objectifying disabled people. But people who are exclusively attracted to the able-bodied and/or the conventionally attractive are rarely accused of fetishizing the able and ambulatory or objectifying the facially symmetrical. Which is why it has always seemed to me—and Gurza agrees with me on this point—that if being with someone

who is turned on by your whatever-the-fuck is good enough for the able-bodied, it's good enough for people with disabilities. Provided of course that, able or disabled, we're appreciated for everything we bring to the table or the chair or the bed.

Ryan Honick, a disability advocate and public speaker, doesn't think you should limit your search to websites aimed exclusively at the disability community.

"It's estimated that one in five people have a disability," said Honick. "I would encourage him to use some of the mainstream apps—like Tinder, OkCupid, Bumble, or Match—and put what he's after front and center."

Honick would caution other disabled people that putting your disability front and center—even on mainstream dating apps—is likely to attract the attention of devotees.

"RAGDOLL doesn't seem like he would mind being with a devotee," said Honick. "But those of us who do mind need to be a little more discerning."

Zooming out for a second: Safety is always a concern when inviting a stranger over for sex, RAGDOLL, even for the non-disabled. In addition to attracting the attention of a few good and decent people, devotees or not, your relative helplessness could attract the attention of a predator. So before inviting anyone over, get their real name and their real phone number. Then share that information with a trusted friend—someone who can check in with you before and after a date—and let your potential new fuck buddy know you're sharing their info with a trusted friend.

Second to last word goes to Honick: "Another option, if it's available to RAGDOLL and he's open to it, would be hiring a sex worker."

And the last word goes to Gurza: "RAGDOLL shouldn't resign himself to the idea that he's a 'pity fuck.' His desires as a disabled man have full value and worth. And I want him to know, as a fellow disabled man, that he can have a fulfilling sex life and that someone out there does find him attractive."

mail@savagelove.net

Follow Dan on Twitter: @fakedansavage
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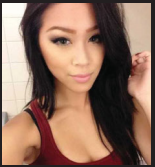
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